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Madame Chair and Members of the committee,

EXHIBIT 12
DATE 1/22/09
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My name is Jenece Jacobs-Sharkey. I am a Director of Services at Opportunity Resources, Inc. in Missoula MT. At Opportunity Resources we serve 245 individuals who are funded through the Dev Disability Program on a daily basis. We employ 169 full time staff who work with the individuals with Developmental Disabilities.

We are a large provider of Work services – Supported Employment and Sheltered, Residential Services – Supported Living and Group Homes and we have a large Transportation Service.

I am here today to explain why I support the rate increase recommended by the state consultant for agencies providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities, specifically, Work Services. As I said previously Opportunity Resources is primarily a community based provider meaning that only 8% of our employees live in our facilities. Opportunity Resources has a large transportation service and 95% of our work service clients get a ride to work from us, however they can take time off when they want and if people do not show up for work then we are not able to bill for them.

By this time of the fiscal year we should have billed 50% of our contract and so far we have only been able to bill 44%. Another way to describe this is what we refer to as utilization, how much the clients are utilizing the services dollars that they are given. Clients pay for their spot at work at Opportunity Resources and we are there, the lights and heat are on and we are ready to work with them. When they do not show up we can not bill for them although we still have the lights and heat on and we have to pay the staff. By this time in the fiscal year we should have billed almost 600 thousand out of our \$1.2 million dollar work services budget, although the program has actually cost us over 640 thousand

dollars. Because of the punitive system that has been developed we have only been able to bill \$523 thousand, that is a difference of over 117 thousand in work service dollars.

The providers of services had a meeting with DDP staff and Norm Davis, the Rates System Consultant, back in June 2008 before this fiscal year began. Norm stated at that meeting that based on the data that was collected by providers and given to Norm to evaluate he determined that the rate for this service was too low; the rate does not cover the cost to provide the service. Norm also said that when you add to that a program like Opportunity that has an additional client attendance issue this is a double whammy. As of the end of last month Opportuntiy Resources is expected to loose over \$228 thousand in work services by the end of this fiscal year.

DDP has told us that they are accumulating these underutilized dollars in their budget from programs across the state that are underutilized. DDP did this last year and they intend to pay us back from this accumulating fund at the end of the fiscal year. The problem with this plan is we do not know how much we may get back and what we learned from last years practice that the total dollars lost will not be made up. This plan creates an serious cash flow problem for providers who need that money throughout the year instead of an infusion at the end of the year. If they plan to do this payback again this year and Norm has an increase in the rate that he feels is more reflective of the costs of the service then why not increase the rate now to keep programs like Opportunity Resources from enduring such huge losses throughout the year.

I am here to ask you today to adequately fund the rate system as recommended by the State Consultant.

My time has ended. I want to thank every one of you for your dedication to the citizens of this state. I am confident you will make the right decisions for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

I will be available for questions.

Jenece Jacobs-Sharkey

Opportunity Resources, Inc.

Director of Services

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